

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

MARCH 18, 2025
2:05 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 329

SENATE BILL NO. 177 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 177 SD1 HD1. The bill authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State. It requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process and makes appropriations. The Department supports this bill.

By implementing more robust assessment processes, SB177 SD1 HD1 promotes responsible and sustainable growth of Hawaii's aquaculture industry which has a rich history and significant potential for expansion. A risk-based framework would help evaluate potential risks associated with the movement of aquatic species and better balance industry growth while minimizing negative impact to native species and ecosystems.



As such, the Department supports this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OUULU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
March 17, 2025
2:05 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

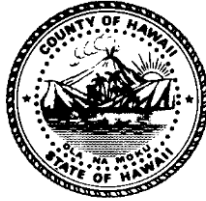
SENATE BILL NO. 177 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun & Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of Senate Bill No. 177 SD1 HD1, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State of Hawaii.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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March 17, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

TUESDAY, March 18, 2025
2:05 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 329

TESTIMONY ON SB 177 SD1 HD1
Relating to Aquaculture

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee,

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability or reduces the impact of pests or disease on agricultural crops, livestock, forests, or the community."

The County of Hawai'i provides written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB177 SD1 HD1**, authorizing the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State and requiring the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry is a leader in the U.S and this measure provides important protections for the industry to continue to support economic growth. Hawai'i County is ranked #1 in the State and #2 in the U.S in terms of aquaculture sales, with aquaculturists generating \$69,393,000 in sales in 2022 ([USDA Census of Agriculture, 2022](#)). The 870-acre Hawaii Ocean Science and Technology Park on Hawai'i Island has created more than 600 jobs and has a \$150 million annual economic impact, even withstanding economic shocks from the COVID pandemic ([Civil Beat, 2023](#)). However, processes to import and move aquatic livestock in the State must be put in place to support the longevity of aquaculture operations and biosecurity of aquatic ecosystems.

Disease can devastate aquaculture industries, and a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards are important protections for both aquaculture operations and

March 17, 2025

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aquatic ecosystems. OsHV-1 microvariants, also known as Oyster herpes, devastated the Australian Pacific oyster industry, putting businesses on the brink of collapse and costing the jobs of oyster farm workers ([ABC News, 2016](#)). Currently in Hawai‘i, imported oyster broodstock are certified as disease-free pre-arrival to the islands yet do not undergo post-arrival inspection. The biosecurity processes outlined in SB177 SD1 HD1 would not only help prevent disease from entering aquaculture operations in Hawai‘i but also help protect native aquatic species.

Thank you for championing agriculture in Hawai‘i and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB177 SD1 HD1**.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benson Medina". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Benson Medina
Director

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



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COUNTY OF MAUI
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TO: Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB177 SD1 HD1, RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The Act authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State. Requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Our kai, near shore waters, native fish populations, and reefs are in a dire situation. The majority of endemic aquatic resources are either endangered, critically endangered, or extinct. For generations, the importation and introduction of non native fish species, for example, have negatively impacted our environment and community. Having a process to assess the risk of the various aquatic materials that are being moved across our Pae 'Āina is long over due.
2. This is an important step towards increased biosecurity. In Hawai'i, we are the endemic species capital of the world. The introduction of any non native species that isn't significantly studied and extensively researched may cause irreparable harm to our environment, leading to potential public health and safety issues, which we unfortunately have multiple examples of across Hawai'i.
3. We fully support the development of a risk-based framework and the establishment of biocontainment standards enforced by HDOA. Concurrently, we would advocate for

HDOA and their Division of Animal Industry to promote and create systems perpetuating and protecting our native and local/naturalized aquatic livestock, while limiting the reliance or future importation of aquatic livestock from outside of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.



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March 18, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

TESTIMONY ON SB 177, SD1, HD1
RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
2:05 PM

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 177, SD1, HD1, which authorizes the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State and requires the Aquaculture Program to develop a risk-based framework and biocontainment standards for the aquatic livestock assessment and approval process.

Hawai'i's aquaculture industry farm gate value is \$89.6M, the second-highest contribution to the economy in diversified agriculture. Hawai'i's favorable climate and geography allow for inherent advantages benefitting aquaculture production.

The Legislature acknowledged the importance of Hawai'i's aquaculture industry by revitalizing the Aquaculture Development Program through Act 63, SLH 2019. However, more investment and research are needed in the aquaculture industry, including research into different types of aquaculture, aquaculture system optimization, and the economic implications of various methods of aquaculture production.

The transfer of aquaculture import oversight from Plant Industries to Animal Industries would place this process under direct veterinary oversight with standardized science-based assessment protocols. Such evaluations are increasingly important as disease, quarantine, and invasive species considerations become increasingly necessary to help safeguard the environment and existing industry from external risks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

LATE



Testimony Presented to
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 2:05am
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
by

Ron Weidenbach, HAAA President

SUBJECT: Support for intent of SB177 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO AQUACULTURE

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA), established in 1975 and representing aquaculture industry members statewide supports the intent of SB177 SD1 HD1 which would transfer the oversight and management of aquaculture import permits from DOA Plant Quarantine to DOA Animal Industries. However, **we respectfully request your consideration of amendments to address the following two concerns:**

- 1) to specify that Animal Industries veterinary oversight will be provided for the Aquaculture Program's development and implementation of standardized assessment protocols and subsequent import permit decision making, and**
- 2) to specify that prior DOA approvals and import permits for existing aquaculture operations be transferred from Plant Quarantine to Animal Industries and remain in effect.**

The proposed transfer would place this critical process under Animal Industries which has the critical veterinary staff expertise. However, the stated responsibility to develop and implement standardized science-based assessment protocols is currently indicted to be under the Aquaculture Program which has marketing and business expertise but no veterinary, aquatic science, or environmental expertise.

Science-based veterinary oversight needs to be specifically required in the development and implementation of the standardized assessment protocols and subsequent import permit decision making. Science-based evaluations are increasingly important and necessary as disease, invasive species, and onsite quarantine capacity become increasingly critical and necessary considerations in this import permitting assessment process to safeguard the biosecurity of Hawaii's natural environment and existing aquaculture operations from external biological risks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of SB177 SD1 HD1 and to request your consideration our two noted amendments.

SB-177-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:45:53 AM

Testimony for CPC on 3/18/2025 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David L. Cohen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to register my strong support for SB177 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO AQUACULTURE. Authorizing the Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture to adopt, amend, and repeal rules to develop an assessment and approval process to import and move aquatic livestock in the State.....

This is an important measure that will assist the aquaculture industry, help to protect natural resources, and ensure public safety.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify,

David L. Cohen